

South American Working Group in Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (SAWITN)

R.L. PISKE, L. LEMME-PLAGHOS*

Servicio de Neuroradiologia Intervencionista, Hospital Beneficencia Portuguesa; Sao Paulo, Brazil

** Centro Endovascular Neurológico Buenos Aires; Buenos Aires, Argentina*

By the end of the last decade several South American radiologists and neurosurgeons who had received their training in Interventional Neuroradiology abroad, mostly in French centres, had already re-entered their own countries. As their practice was a new and unknown subspecialty in their homelands, the need arose for a local forum to exchange their own evolving experiences.

This situation led Ronie Leo Piske from Brazil and Luis Lemme-Plaghos from Argentina, while participating in an Interventional Radiology Course in Brazil at the end of 1990, to initiate friendly conversations in order to organise informal Morbidity and Mortality Meetings solely devoted to Interventional Neuroradiology.

Their original idea was a regional meeting after the annual one held by that time at Val D'Isere adding an invited "International Guest" to moderate the different presentations and keep the participants updated in new techniques and standards with short lectures.

Following their proposal, nineteen Interventional Neuroradiologists from South America met for the first time in the Department of Radiology of the Hospital Beneficencia Portuguesa in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in the month of May 1991.

At this first two-day meeting co-ordinated by

Ronie Piske and José María Modenesi Freitas from Sao Paulo participants included Luis Lemme-Plaghos and Claudio Schonholz from Argentina, and Carlos Abath, Valeria Cardoso de Souza, Crescêncio Cêntola, Ana Maria Blasi de Toledo Pize, Odon Ferreira da Costa, Walter Kanakarian, Eduardo Noda Kihara, Claudio Eustáquio Lima, Guilherme Mourão, Luiz Antonio Pezzi Portela, Eduardo Raupp, Marcos Rodacki, Marcio Sampaio, Osvani Simonato and Andréia B. Veloso from Brazil. The first "International Guest" to be invited was Prof. Pierre Lasjaunias from Paris who proved an excellent 'Moderator' during the hard discussion of cases.

Although quite informal, this first meeting was considered a success so a decision was taken that yearly meetings should be organised in the future to pursue a continental integration among South American interventional neuroradiologists who obviously shared the same technical and academic evolving situations, as well as the same regional problems in their everyday practice. It was also decided that the encounters should be itinerant, so as to be held in a different countries each time, and that the organisation would be tackled by the local Interventionists who should take care of obtaining funding and inviting different "Guest Moderators".

Following these objectives the second meeting was held in December 1992 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the co-ordination of the local interventionists Luis Lemme-Plaghos and Claudio Schonholz. At this time 14 neuroradiologists from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay participated with oral case presentations, while Prof. Jacques Moret acted as an excellent "Guest Moderator" for the first time. By this time "the Group" had already identified itself as "Grupo Sudamericano de Trabajo en Neuro Angiografía Diagnóstica y Terapéutica - Grupo de Trabalho Sul-Americano en Neuro Angiografía Diagnóstica y Terapéutica" since both languages, Portuguese and Spanish, were spontaneously used by participants, while "Guest Moderators" lectures were given in French or English.

Since then, yearly meetings have been held with a slowly but steadily increasing number of participants, the new ones being those recently arriving from their training abroad in the first years and subsequently the ones who had received training in the newly developed South American Neurointerventional Centers.

These meetings were the following:

1994 - Guaruyá, Brazil

Co-ordinator: José María Modenesi Freitas;
Guest Moderator: Prof. Daniel Rufenacht; 17 participants.

1995 - Iguazú, Argentina

Co-ordinator: Luis Lemme-Plaghos; Guest Moderator: Prof. Luc Picard; 18 participants.

1996 - Punta del Este, Uruguay

Co-ordinator: Andrés de Tenyi; Guest Moderator: Prof. D. Kühne and Prof. Jacques Moret; 25 participants.

1997 - Angra dos Reis, Brazil

Co-ordinators: Marcio Sampaio and Jose Zirretta. Guest Moderators: Jacques Moret and Fernando Viñuela; 38 participants.

1998 - La Cumbrecita, Argentina

Co-ordinators: Gustavo Foa, Mario Castellari and Carlos Oulton. Guest Moderator: Prof. Jacques Moret; 40 participants.

1999 - Recife, Brazil

Co-ordinators: Ronie Piske and Carlos Abath; Guest Moderator: Prof. Pierre Lasjaunias; 41 participants.

Needless to say, a lot of personal effort from all participating members was necessary to keep "the Group" running while permanent administrative assistance and sponsorship by activity related companies such as Balt, Cook, Cordis Endovascular, General Electric, Guerbet, Mallinkrodt, Nycomed, Philips, Schering and Target Therapeutics facilitated the organisation of each meeting.

During the last meeting and due to almost a decade of long-standing and hard work together the participants decided during the assembly to give "the Group" a more structured organisation defining as objectives the debate of future continental regulations and standardisation of training programs for the practice of interventional neuroradiology, the creation of regional data bases as well as co-operative research projects and to establish stable relationships with other identical societies. It was also accepted that the yearly elected Co-ordinator would act from then on as General Secretary for that period, running the administrative office, keeping the members' records, receiving new memberships applications, writing down the meeting's proceedings in order to preserve them by publication in a related periodical and representing "the Group" in other forums.

By general agreement it was decided that all participants in "the Group" should apply for WFITN membership and that a formal request should be made for its recognition as Continental Society by the Federation.

It was also voted and accepted that "the Group" should carry as international denomination the name "South American Working-Group in Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (SAWITN)" after changing the original group's name to the more appropriate one of "Grupo Sul-Americano de Trabalho em Neuroradiologia Intervencionista y Terapéutica - Grupo Sudamericano de Trabajo en Neuroradiología Intervencionista y Terapéutica (GSATNIT)".

Since the original first meeting with nineteen members, many other interventional neuroradiologists have joined the Group: Jorge Baccaro, Mario Castellari, Alejandro Ceciliano, Roxana Ceratto, Javier Echevarrieta, Gustavo Foa, Silvia Garbugino, Ricardo García Mónaco, Héctor Giaccobe, Pedro Lilyk, Luis Felipe Maffei, Silvio Martoni, Alejandro Musacchio,



The members of the South American Working-Group in Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (SAWITN) with Guest Moderator Prof. Pierre Lasjaunias during the last meeting in Porto Galhinas, Recife, Brazil.

Carlos Oulton, and Sergio Petrocelli from Argentina; Luis Andrade de Oliveira, Marco Antonio Barbosa da Silva, Laécio Leitão Batista, José Guilherme Caldas, Natacha Calheiros de Lima, Henrique Queiroga Cartaxo, Ana Aurea Curty, João Renato Figueiredo de Souza, Anderson Guedes Pessoa, Ricardo Loureiro Sobrinho, Christiane Monteiro de Siqueira Campos, Luis Alberto Moreira de Souza, Dárcio Roberto Nalli, Castro Netto, Benjamin Pessoa, Fabiane Maciel Ramos, Sérgio de Siqueira Pinheiro, André Tavares da Silva, Luis Marcelo Ventura and José Carlos Zirretta from Brazil; José Tevah from Chile; and Andrés de Tenyi and Teresa Lin from Uruguay.

All of them keep in permanent contact among themselves over and above the Yearly Group Meeting itself which means that the original objective of continental integration has been plainly fulfilled.

The SAWITN next meetings will take place in Montevideo, Uruguay, in April 2000, acting as local Co-ordinator Prof. Andrés de Tenyi while Chile has been elected as host country for the year 2001 meeting.

Luis A. Lemme-Plaghos, M.D.
Beruti 3834 P.B. 'A'
(1425) Buenos Aires
Argentina
E-mail: lemme@arnet.com.ar